Elk Point REVIEW

Bringing You the News since 1984

Tuesday, January 4, 2011

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Elks discontinue bingo
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Biggest bucks of 2010
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Contributed photo

Tree of Warmth Wraps Up

On Thursday, Dec. 23, the King's Kids Youth Group from the Elk Point Christian Community Church collected all the toques, mitts, scarves, socks, etc. from the trees they had set up at the three banks in Elk Point. Youth group members posed in the foyer of their new church with some of the items before they were delivered to The Mustard Seed in Edmonton. The KIng's Kids are truly greatful for all the support given to this endevour, and say that the true meaning of Christmas shone through with the large amount of donations. Elk Point Christian Community Church is very proud of the King's Kids, who came up with this idea to spread their unselfish love for those less fortunate.

Looking back at 2010

By Vicki Brooker
Review Staff

As we hang up the new calendars and jot the first appointments in our new day planners, it's time to take a look back at the news that made our headlines during the past 12 months…

January

The sea can issue was back before town council, with the decision to pass a bylaw prohibiting use of the storage containers anywhere in town except the industrial area making some residents unhappy. Elk Point Palliative Care Association found a big cheque for $11,178.40 under their Christmas tree, in appreciation for their work at a Canadian Natural Resources fundraiser. Antlers exhibited by Jim Bodnar, Ty Johre and Dennis Ewanec were the big winners at Elk Point Oilmen's Association's second annual big bucks contest.

Five years of saving up allocations under the joint provincial/federal New Deal program has added up to $213,262 that Elk Point town council agreed to put toward their 50 Ave. upgrade. The Elk Point Trail Riders snowmobile club asked the chamber of commerce to reconsider their plans to prohibit vehicle traffic east of the EcoCentre, which would cut off access to their cabin and the adjacent picnic area. Camryn Jack Maddock of Elk Point was St. Paul's New Year's baby, born Jan. 1.

Lac La Biche – St. Paul MLA Ray Danyluk was Alberta's new Minister of Infrastructure, following a provincial cabinet shuffle. Elk Point Community Advisory Policing Committee got its first look at the new public harassment and curfew bylaw passed by the town "to regulate, control and abate disruptive behaviour in public places" in the community. An enrollment ceremony that marked the 100th anniversary of the Girl Guides of Canada was a bittersweet occasion for Guider Margaret White and Brown Owl Germaine Labrie, who would be leaving Guides at the end of the season.

Heinsburg Community Club honoured their dedicated volunteers, with special tribute paid to founding member Alice Gregor on her 90th birthday. Progress on the EcoCentre received a setback when the eco-friendly flooring material was found to be faulty and was recalled. Elk Point Atom Avalanche played six games in four days, including two provincial games and their home tournament.

(Continued on Page 2)

Dec. 27 fire leaves family of four homeless

By Vicki Brooker
Review Staff

An Elk Point family is homeless after a Dec. 27 fire that destroyed their 1997-model mobile home in a matter of minutes.

Tammy Ryall, her 17- and 16-year-old sons and 14-year-old daughter escaped the flames with nothing but the clothes they were wearing, 17-year-old Brock running back into the blazing trailer to rescue the ashes of the teens' father, Peter Dumont, who died Oct. 2.

"There was no insurance on the trailer," said Lloyd Dumont, Peter's brother. "Basically, Tammy has to try and fend for herself now."

Some help is coming from the community. Workers at E-Can Oilfield Services and Leeway Heavy Oil are collecting donations, Dumont said. "And Lucille Povaschuk at the Baptist Church is trying to gather clothing for them. We've found a place for them at the apartments, and they'll furnish it, but it's $1,300 a month and $1,300 damage deposit, and that's a problem."

He noted that Mayor Parrish Tung "is helping all he can" to remedy the situation, but the search for other assistance will have to wait for government agencies to reopen Jan. 4 after the Christmas break.

Dumont said donations can be dropped off at his home, and anyone with assistance to offer the family can call him at 780-724-4114.

The family is currently staying with relatives.

Vicki Brooker photo

Crumpled wreckage is all that remains of a fire-ravaged mobile home on Elk Point's west side.

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Looking back at the 2010 headlines

(Continued from Front Page)

February

A proposed expansion of Canadian Natural Resources Limited's oil operations immediately south of Elk Point had town council questioning the effect that reduced spacing of wells would have on the town. Elk Point's Canada Day Committee held their first meeting of the year, with Deanna Easthope already hard at work on a comprehensive outline of the day's activities required with the federal grant application.

Steve and Scott Penz, Don Anderson and Paige White won the grand challenge at the 27th Annual Elk Point Oilmen's Bonspiel, their E-Can rink bringing Leonard Gadowski's Shamrock Valley Enterprises rink's winning streak to an end. Doug Bassett was named EPOA's 2010 Oilman of the Year. Darren Tymofichuk, Dayle Oster and Dana Gibson were the top speakers at the Elk Point 4-H Multi Club Public Speaking competition.

Elk Point RCMP Sgt. Brad Lazicki and Corp. Kevin McGillivray met with town council to get input on the town's policing concerns, with council praising the RCMP's increased visibility in the community. New interpretive signage was in the works for Fort George and Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site, with design sketches shown to the Friends of the Forts by facility supervisor Marianne Mack at their first meeting of the year.

Elk Point chamber of commerce had a new vice president and treasurer for the first time in three years, with Debra McQuinn taking over the VP chair and Geoff Hyslop winning the vote over Sue Cleland for the treasurer's position. Elk Point Elementary School students played the spoons, played bingo, did the chicken dance, crawled under and over a giant parachute and held an indoor relay race as part of the fun at their winter carnival.

Tevye, the dairyman, decries the decline of tradition in this unforgettable scene from "Fiddler on the Roof."

March

Elk Point town council stirred $25,000 of their Municipal Sustainability Initiative funding into the pot for the Elk Point Arts and Leisure Centre kitchen project. Over 40 vintage sleds from as far away as Red Deer and St. Walburg were in town for the Elk Point Trail Riders' annual snowmobile show and shine. Northern Lights Library System director Mircea Panciuk and assistant Brigitte Sakaluk lobbied MP Brian Storseth for CAP computers for CFB Namao library and for the book postage rate that is vital to their operation.

The women of five local churches led the World Day of Prayer service, with guest speaker Seyi Oyebode enlightening the audience on the challenges faced by women in the Republic of Cameroon, while Allen Warawa spoke on the year's theme, "Let everything that has breath praise God." A number of local businesspeople and professionals found themselves behind bars for a good cause as the Water Spray Park fundraising committee held a hilarious Arrest-a-Thon. A much-improved curling season wound up with a potluck and draw-to-the-button competitions.

Town council had a full house of visitors, with an objection to a proposed street closure and delegations from the Elk Point Trail Riders and the Multiple Sclerosis advisory committee all having their say at the meeting. A public hearing on proposed County of St. Paul division boundary changes drew minimal attendance. Elk Point Community Choir brought back no less than seven performers from their 2000 dinner theatre hit, 'Fiddler on the Roof" as they delighted decade-later audiences with the same classic tale.

Elk Point Skating Club brought back even more memories as they skated to music from the past six decades, with costumes to match as they moved from the rock'n'roll era through the disco years and beyond. Fun for children topped the chamber of commerce agenda, with plans to build and raffle a miniature EcoCentre playhouse and a spokesman from the Elk Point Firefighters Association on hand to unveil plans for an Easter egg hunt.

Easter bonnets and bunny hops were the order of the day at Elk Point Elementary, as students entertained the Heritage Lodge seniors at a tea before heading home for the Easter break. Town council chose Select Engineering to oversee the 50 Avenue street upgrade project. Elk Point Community Choir's performance of 'Fiddler on the Roof' drew acclaim from the Shalom Toronto Jewish newspaper, who sent a reporter to cover the show after the play's production crew contacted the paper to obtain copies to use onstage.

April

A huge and enthusiastic crowd gathered at Elk Point's newly opened fire hall for the first-ever Easter egg hunt, which followed a pancake breakfast enjoyed by all ages. MLA Ray Danyluk defended the province's decisions regarding health care spending, which included paying off a $1.4 billion deficit and giving Alberta Health a funding increase for each of the next five years. Virginia Kinch retired after 40 years with Canada Post.

The snow was deep, but the Arts and Leisure Centre was dug out in time to host Danny Hooper and his band for the chamber of commerce to hold their well-attended fundraising dinner, auction and concert. Progress was slow but steady on the Visitor Information EcoCentre with cupboards under construction and a major clean-up scheduled for the basement storage area.

Elk Point 4-H Multi Club sponsored an ATV safety seminar that urged participants to "ride safe, ride smart and respect the environment." Town council offered financial support to the upcoming Elk Point Emergency Services golf tournament, Canada Day and donated the use of the Canada Day stage for a benefit concert that would raise funds for those living with or recovering from chronic illnesses.

Elk Point Ukrainian Dance Club celebrated the arrival of spring with their 31st annual spring concert, with a packed house on hand to see dancers from tots to adults perform in colourful splendor. Security headed the chamber of commerce agenda, following break-ins to the Visitor Information EcoCentre, the old tourist information centre and the Trail Riders cabin.

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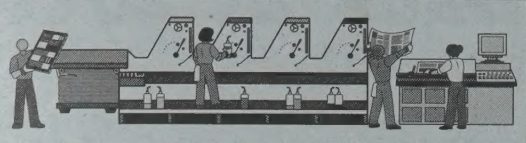

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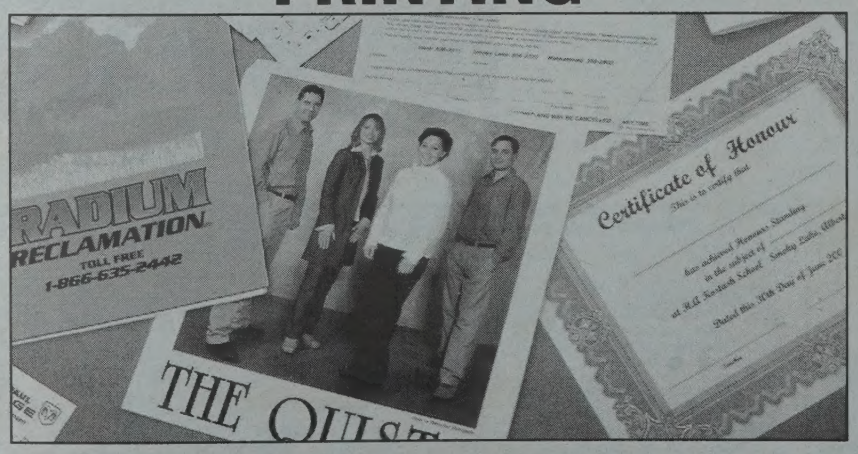

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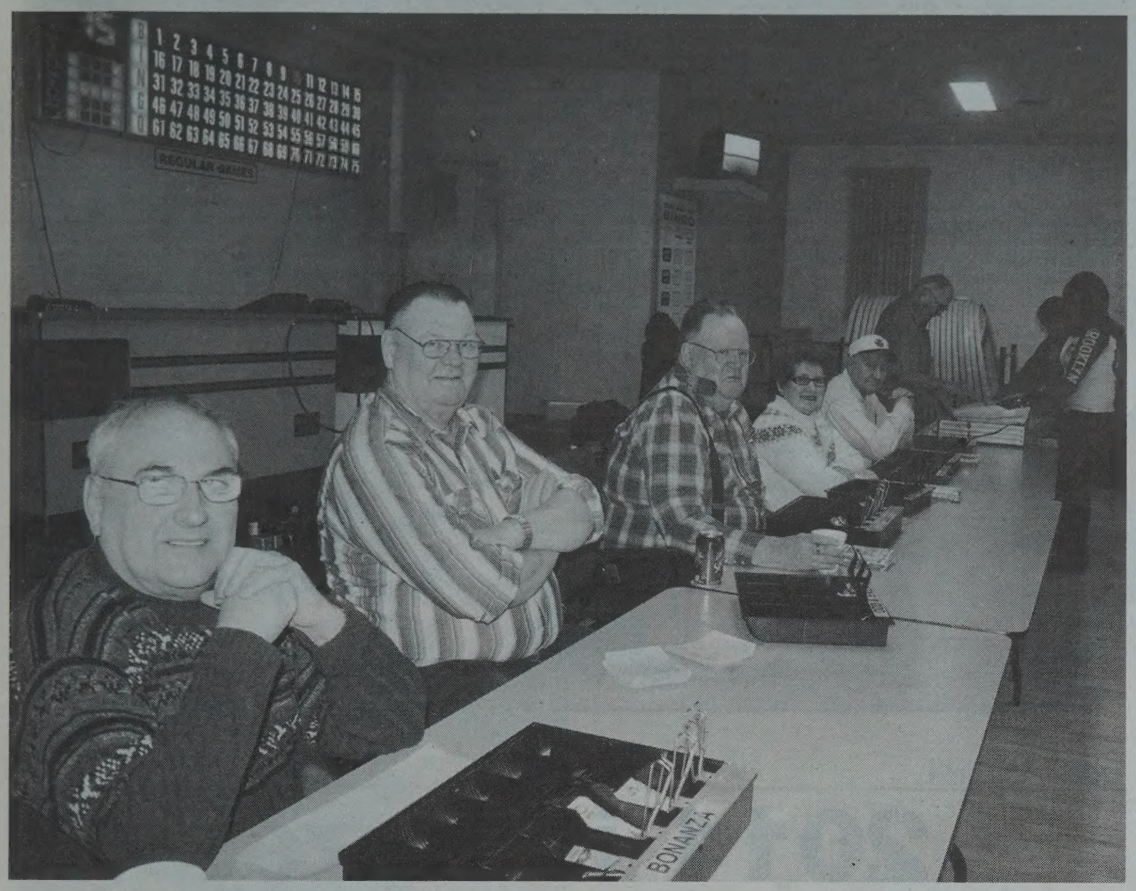
End of an era at Elks' last bingo



Vicki Brooker photos

Caller Don Pilisko announces the first number at last Thursday's Elk Point Elks Bingo, the end of the year and the final bingo for the Elks, who decided to discontinue the weekly bingos due to a steady decline in crowds. It was not an easy decision, and Elk Lawrence Pidluzny (far left) expressed the feelings of fellow workers Allan Berg, Gary Young, Bernadette Godelin, Walter Jendruk and Archie Trach when he noted, "The sadness is creeping in," as they sold their final stacks of cards. The Elks bingos date back close to 40 years, some members recalling cardboard cards with slides to cover the called numbers, and busy times when bingo players filled both floors of the hall.

More 2010 in review

(Continued from Page 2)

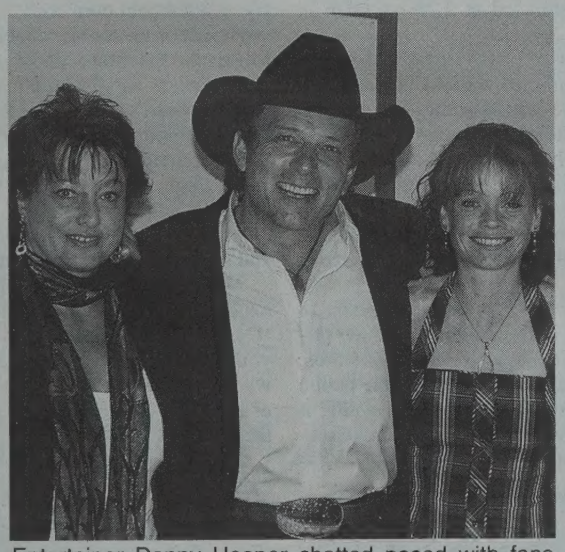
May

The Visitor Information EcoCentre's wind turbine was up and spinning, just in time to welcome the Lions Walk for Sight and the Iron Horse Ultra 100 run the following Saturday. Campground changes, including closure of the Kehewin Lake provincial campsite and the change of Whitney Lake campground to a day use area, had the Elk Point Elks Lodge in high gear, preparing their Wilderness Park for a potential increase in visitation. Town council approved their 2009 financial statement, which showed increased financial and non-financial assets and decreased debenture debt.

A large and very vocal group of seniors protesting Alberta Health Services' province-wide 21-day menu for health care facilities overshadowed the usual business agenda at the Alberta Council on Aging annual meeting. Elk Point FCSS began the huge task of relocating their office to the Visitor Information EcoCentre. That facility, along with the rest of the Iron Horse Trail staging area, was now being powered by the solar and wind installations, economic development coordinator Bob Bezpalko told the chamber.

Bezpalko told town council he was "disappointed that the county doesn't see (the Kehewin campsite) as an economic driver," after the county declined an offer from the province to take over its operation. However, the county did give their support to a much-needed upgrade of Camp Whitney. It wasn't a usual form of recreation, but recreation director Valerie Lazicki was right in there with a pitch to encourage volunteers to participate in the town's annual clean-up blitz.

Elk Point chamber of commerce was named Alberta's 2009 Chamber of the Year for chambers with 100 or less members. Heinsburg Community Development Society was launched with hope and enthusiasm, and members were looking forward to a visit from an engineer who would make recommendations for the restoration of their vintage train station. The future of Elk Point Minor Hockey was in jeopardy, as no volunteers came forward to take executive positions for the coming season.



Entertainer Danny Hooper chatted posed with fans Linda Dorey and Nathalie Havener when he was in town for the chamber of commerce fundraiser.

June

Elk Point Community Choir marked two decades of concerts with a program "which is 20 years personified," according to president Don Conrad, featuring some of their favourite numbers and paying tribute to 12 former members who have now passed on. A one-mill drop in the town's property taxes for four of five categories didn't necessarily mean a drop in taxes for some ratepayers, due to property reassessment. Rain, snow and icy winds plagued the third annual Riverland Adventure Challenge, making it more of a survival exercise than a pleasant outing.

Katelynn Vallee showed the grand champion steer and Ashley Bristow the reserve champion at Elk Point 4-H Multi Club's achievement day, which also exhibited the cow-calf, horse, photography, crafts and small engines projects.

(Continued on Page 5)

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• Regular cattle sales will resume January 11th, 2011 and will be held every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

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Editorial

Inaccurate predictions

Here's hoping that this year's predictions will be a bit more accurate than we offered in January 2010.

True, the Visitor Information EcoCentre is completed, up and running, but the water spray park is still waiting to be built, downtown businesses have not yet begun to spruce up their premises and new development at the staging area has been limited to the removal of the tourist booth and building a temporary skating rink. Nor did the south entrance sign magically appear. Better luck this year, when hopefully, all those will take place.

Other than that, it's been a progressive and productive year and Elk Point is truly "the right place to be."

This year, we predict town council will make the best decision for all concerned regarding our water supply, the chamber of commerce will get their elevator going and the mini EcoCentre raffled off, and the Elks and Royal Purple will enjoy their Thursday night freedom from decades of working bingo.

Way Back When...

User pay, license hike, drumming reindeer

Here's the news that made the headlines of the Lakeland Review and Elk Point Review for the week of Jan. 4 in...

1986

Andy Mikitka's Ravine Drive home took top billing in the chamber of commerce Christmas lighting and decorating contest for the third year in a row, with Emil and Virginia Mudryk's home placing second and Pauline Pankiw's home third. The town's garbage collection was revamped, going to a user-pay basis for residents.

1991

Elk Point's business license fees underwent a dramatic increase, ranging from 50 to 660 per cent, as of Jan. 1, with non-food hawkers and those holding circuses, carnivals and exhibitions hit with the 660 per cent increase, beauty parlors, caterers, landscapers/gardeners/greenhouses, janitorial contractors, food hawkers, rug and upholstery cleaners and sign painters seeing their fees triple, and resident owners of other businesses seeing a 50 per cent increase while non-resident owners saw their rates double. The town of Elk Point issued 22 building permits for construction valued at $1.6 million in 1990.

1996

Elk Point's second annual First Night Festival drew a huge and happy crowd, with four venues offering everything from dogsled rides and a bale maze to a karate demonstration, First Nations and Ukrainian dancers, a quilt display, a puppet show, the opportunity to try out both floor and ice curling and a fireworks display. Heinsburg resident Kirsten Sanders was presented with a fine arts award in music, piano, from Augustana University College.

2001

Santa searched for the perfect star to top his tree and later set up a shopping network 1-800 number for gift requests at the second of two Elk Point Elementary School concerts. Tiny Alison Ference won a stuffed lion several times her size when the F. G. Miller Travel Club made their raffle draw at the annual Christmas brunch.

2006

The name of delighted local shopper Tara Cameron was pulled from a massive box of entries to win the chamber of commerce draw for a trip for four to Disneyland. F. G. Miller alumni were welcomed back to the school for the annual Christmas brunch, where the entertainment featured music making elves Alex Buck, Eric Mosley and Billy Hudy keeping in time with reindeer Warren Jurak on the drums.

Guest Column

2011 is here!

deanna **EASTHOPE**
from the FCSS desk

Now that 2011 has arrived, what do you think the year will bring? What will happen in Canada?

Some of the 2011 highlights as given by the Economic Advisory Council to our Prime Minister are:

Economy to grow at 8.5 per cent in 2010-11 and 9.0% in 2011-12. ... Agriculture projected to grow at 4.5% in 2011; Industry projected to grow 10.3% in 2011-12; Services projected to grow 9.8% in 2011-12.

Slow recovery in global economic and financial situation

Rising domestic Savings and Investment chief engines of growth. Investment rate is expected to be 38.4% in 2011-12. Domestic savings project close to 36% in 2011-12.

Current Account deficit estimated at 2.7% of GDP in 2010-11 and 2.9% of GDP in 2011-12.

Inflation rate projected at 6.5% by March 2011 due to expected normal monsoon combined with the base effect.

From these highlights, we can assume our Federal Government is taking these into consideration around their seven goals most common to the Canadian economy. They are: political stability; reducing the national debt; economic growth; increased productivity and efficiency; equitable distribution of income; price stability, and full employment. We could highlight anyone of these goals and state each one is important.

The big question now becomes: "What is important to the private sector"? After all, in the long run, it is the private sector that influences the public sector. In other words, employment of the people determines how well the public sector succeeds. With the downturn of the economy, it meant job looses and hence less spending in the public sector. The recession was in effect. Therefore we are now looking at recovery, repair and fixing. This is both the private and public sector goal for 2011.

One of the big fixing items with individuals and families will be reducing their debt, which many people had to go into during the recession time. There are some contacts for help in this area. Credit Advisors such as "Helping People Get Out of Debt" can be reached at 1-800-766-3328. Debtors Advocates which is a Government Licensed Debt Repayment Agency in the Province of Alberta, can be reached at 1-800-481-5569 or (780) 702-6729 (lines open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) www.CanadaDebtAdvice.ca/Edmonton

If in 2011, one of your goals is to find a job in Alberta, try www.jobboom.com or another source is www.indeed.ca. or www.jobbank.gc.ca. Now, if you want to stay in Elk Point, check our local newspaper, the *Elk Point Review* for any employment opportunities.

It has been said by some local employers that volunteering in the community helps your job resume tremendously. If you are interested in finding out where you can volunteer in Elk Point, just call the Elk Point FCSS office at 780-724-3800 or stop by and pick up the current Community Directory which gives you contact names for all the clubs and organizations in Elk Point.

Maybe one of your goals in 2011 will be to update your education. www.onlineupgrading.com

can be used if you need to upgrade your high school. If you need to upgrade your skills go to www.CanadaJobs.com. That is a very interesting web site as it can be used by anyone who wants to enhance any of their current skills.

To sum up what your goals might be in 2011, let me close by saying good luck to everyone in 2011 and quote the first verse of the poem "The Ladder of St. Augustine" by Henry Wordsworth Longfellow.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The Elk Point Review publishes a variety of opinions as a contribution to debate on matters of public concern. Unsigned editorials express the view of this newspaper's editorial board which includes the Publisher and the Editor. Signed pieces express the view of the individual writer.

Elk Point Review

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Adult Whitetail winner Ivan Fontaine (right), tiny Sidney Crawford, standing in for Youth Whitetail winner Erin Lychak, and Mule Deer winner Lawrence Kocil display this year's finest racks.

Hunters display season's biggest bucks

By Vicki Brooker
Review Staff

Elk Point and area hunters displayed their finest trophies on Friday at the Elk Point Arts and Leisure Centre, with Dennis Ewanec on hand to measure horns and calculate the scores to determine this year's champions.

Ivan Fontaine took the Adult Whitetail Deer award with a rack measuring 191 4/8, while Lawrence Kocil's top Mule Deer measured in at 155 2/8. The Youth Whitetail award went to Erin Lychak, with a measurement of 143 0/8. All three winners will have their trophy racks mounted, courtesy of Xtreme Oilfield, Kudu and Prairie Tech. Poacher's Corner and CCS were also major sponsors of the event.

One head mount also was the day's top door prize, this one going to Shane Fontaine. Other major prize winners included Jordan Mudryk, Brandi Malachowski, Orville Lovell and Terri Breen, who all won rifles. A wide array of door prizes also went home with the hunters as they celebrated the end of a successful season.

Alberta Health's 21-day menu for health care centres and long term care facilities was one of the top 2010 newsmakers. Here, seniors at the Alberta Council on Aging annual meeting sign letters protesting the change as Margaret Modin stands by to add the letters to a growing pile for shipment to the government.

Elk Point Auto Club's annual Show and Shine brought out a good crowd to meander along Main Street, checking out the long lines of shiny vintage vehicles on the first Saturday in June. The show provides plenty of nostalgia for older viewers and a good opportunity for collectors to swap stories about their favourites.

Looking back at at June's top headlines

(Continued from Page 3)

A 1959 Edsel, once owned by the late Johnny Oryschuk and restored to showroom condition by Gary Fakeley of Ardrossan, won the antiques category at the 20th annual Elk Point Auto Club show and shine. Fishing Lake parents were outraged by a recommendation by St. Paul Education Regional Division superintendent Glen Brodziak that high school students from that community attend Heinsburg School instead of F. G. Miller, as they have been for the past four years.

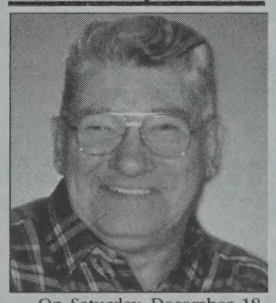
The first-ever Stoney Lake ranch rodeo was part of the fun on Farmers Day, along with a picnic and a ball tournament. Jim Hawkins retired from the presidency of Elk Point Further Education, a post he has held for 22 years, and was succeeded by Sandra Cameron. Elk Point 4-H Multi Club won the Stall Display honours at the St. Paul District Show and Sale, while Nicole Tymofichuk's two-year-old cow and calf won the grand champion trophy, Alanna Ockerman won firsts in senior grooming and showmanship, with Kayla Gibson second in senior grooming, while Janice Tymofichuk was second in senior grooming at the District Invitational Heifer Show.

Premier Ed Stelmach cut blue, gold and green ribbons and snipped a strip of steel plate with the Jaws of Life to officially open the newly renovated Northern Lights Library System headquarters, the Elk Point Arts and Leisure Centre, the Elk Point Visitor Information Eco Centre and the new Elk Point fire hall, during a whirlwind tour of all four facilities. Norine Kim accepted a cheque for $2,000 after her duck crossed the finish line in the Great Elk Point Duck Race, which raised money toward the water spray park. Valeen Jackson was Heinsburg's 2010 graduate, while Brittany Bzowy, Cathy Olstad, Adriauhana Faithful, Jerrika Durocher-Barthel and Skye Durocher made up Elk Point Outreach School's Graduating Class of 2010.

Thirty-four members of F. G. Miller's Class of 2010, including 24 who had already received their diplomas, celebrated the end of their high school days with the school's longest-ever grad theme, "May your dreams take you… to the corners or your smiles, to the he highest of your hopes, to the windows of your opportunities, and to the most special places your heart has ever known." Kehewin campground reopened in time for Canada Day weekend, after the province partnered with a Bonnyville company to operate it. Heinsburg Community School bid farewell to principal Jill Greening at their awards day, where Kerri Dion-Walker and Bradley Saddleback received awards from St. Paul Regional School Division. A similar award at Elk Point Elementary School went to Rosie Sam, who was also one of 15 recipients of the prestigious Grace Franks Awards.

OBITUARY

GARNER, Gilbert



On Saturday, December 18, 2010, Mr. Gilbert Garner of Elk Point passed away.

He is survived by his loving wife, Sylvia of 58 years; 2 sisters-in-law; 6 brothers-in-law; numerous nieces & nephews; many cousins & other relatives in the United States. Gilbert was predeceased by his parents, Earl & Dora.

You are cordially invited to a Celebration of Life (Open House) in honor of Gilbert on Saturday, January 8, 2011 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Elks Hall, Elk Point. If desired, donations may be made to the Salvation Army or Elk Point Health Care Centre c/o Box 1780, St. Paul AB T0A 3A0.

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Bethel Lutheran Church of Lea Park
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Holy Communion 2nd and 3rd Sundays

Bible Fellowship Church Clandonald
Services held every Sunday at 11 a.m.

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They shoot, they score!

By Vicki Brooker
Review Staff

Elk Point players scored half of the St. Paul Midget B Canadiens goals in Sunday's 8 – 1 win over Wainwright, three of them in the first 10 minutes.

Brett "Moose" Ockerman, with assists by Brandon Gamache and Jason Jubinville, and "Dan the Man" Garrett scored 20 seconds apart, just over six minutes into the game, with Jared Vallee, assisted by Blake Sellars making it 3-0 for the Habs three minutes later. Riley Chantry scored off assists by Vallee and Sellars with five minutes left in the period to increase the lead.

Seven minutes into the second, Sellars again combined his talents with Vallee's for a shorthanded goal, Wainwright scoring their lone marker with 9:12 on the clock.

Gamache opened the third period scoring right off the faceoff, assisted by Jubinville, with "The Moose" scoring his second of the afternoon unassisted, and Jubinville adding the Canadiens' final of the afternoon of an assist by Dakota Cross on a power play.

The Midget Bs will take on Lloydminster Friday at 7 p.m. at the Clancy Richard Arena, and will travel to Wainwright Saturday for a 4 p.m. rematch.

Christmas cheer!

Elk Point Trail Riders Snowmobile Club made their raffle draw for a wheelbarrow loaded with Christmas cheer just before Christmas, after extending their deadline for several weeks. Mike MacDonald of the Trail Riders made the presentation to lucky winner Geoff Hyslop.

Reeve election tops county's 2010 news

By Shauna Burke
Review Contributor

The top story of the year in the County of St. Paul was political, said Reeve for the County of St. Paul Steve Upham. The voter turnout in the county at the municipal elections, held Oct 18, was in excess of 80 per cent in some areas of the county, a remarkable number compared to other municipal elections in Canada.

"Certainly in the province you would be hard pressed to find a county that had that high of a voter turnout," said Upham, who felt this level of political engagement was a real highlight of 2010.

Upham won the race for the position of reeve at large with 1,257 votes to 1,020 votes for Robert Bouchard, who previously served the community as reeve for 30 years. Ben Dyck placed third with 428 votes.

The interest in the elections began in October, 2009 when county residents voted to have an elected reeve instead of having the reeve appointed by the county councillors. As a result, the electoral boundaries were redrawn prior to the municipal elections, creating six divisions instead of seven.

"The interest in municipal politics was definitely a plus for the County this year," he said.

Fire Services

The County of St. Paul and the Town of Elk Point jointly completed the construction of a new fire hall in Elk Point this year. Although final costs on the project were not available, CAO for the county, Sheila Kitz, estimates the county's contribution to the project will be about $700,000.

The county also contributed approximately $91,000 toward the purchase of a new fire rescue truck for the St. Paul fire department, $40,000 toward the purchase of a new rapid response truck for Mallaig and $6,250 toward the purchase of a new Ranger side by side for the Ashmont fire department, to be used for remote area rescue.

The county initiated a change in the 911 dispatch from Strathcona to Bonnyville, which will happen in January. After the change of dispatch, the municipality will set up the new rural addressing system to help emergency vehicles locate rural residences in need.

"They won't have to tell them to turn at the third outhouse on the left," joked Upham. "They can now just go to the numbered house. It will all be connected into the GPS (Global Positioning System)."

He said, in 2010, the county continued to work on developing their GIS (Geographic Information System), which is a computer program with mapped data for the entire county. A van drove all the roads of the county, collecting video data that could be used for road construction and development projects.

"We can basically drive county roads from council chambers," said Upham.

(Continued on Page 8)

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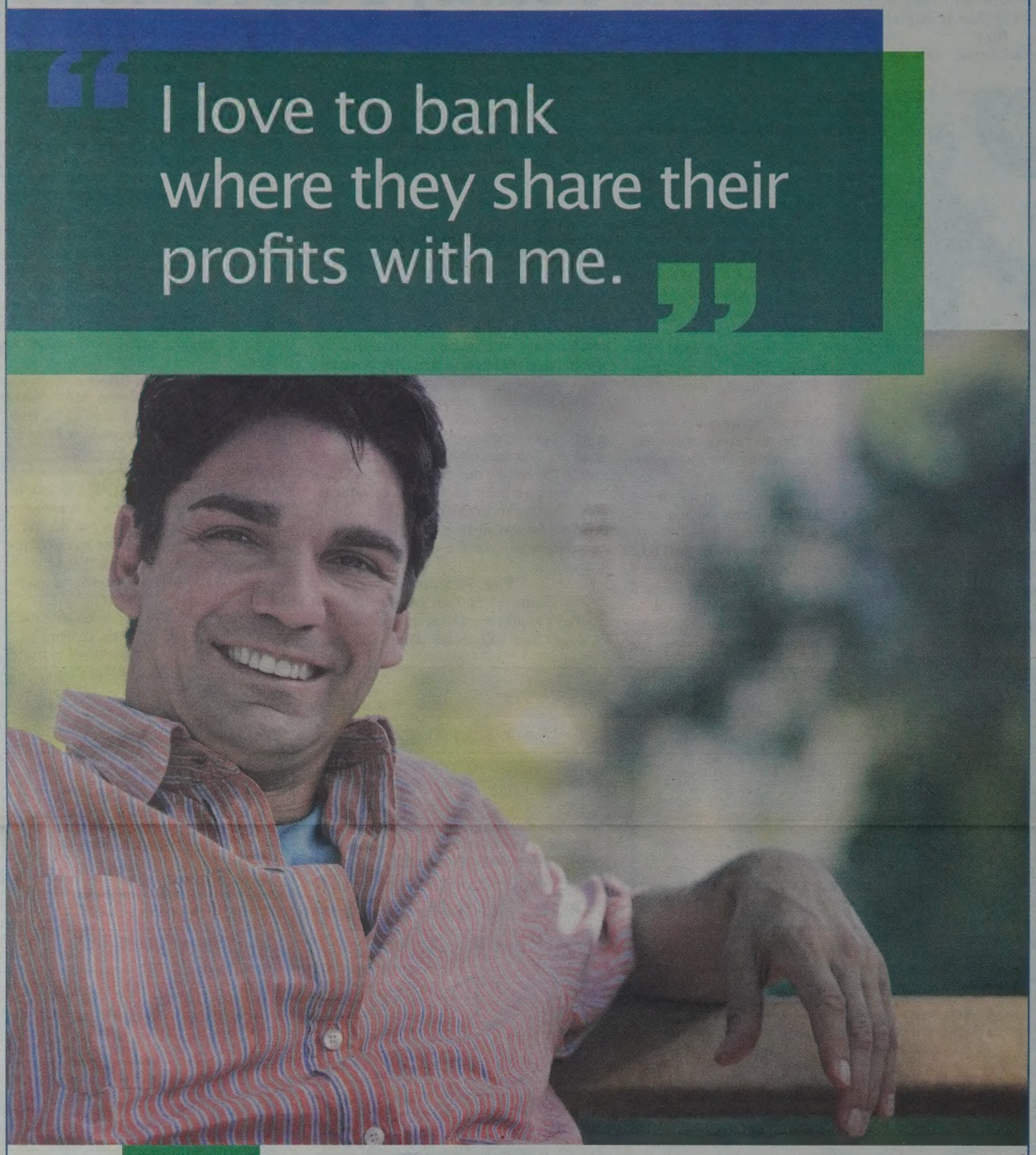

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County

(Continued from Page 7)

Kitz explained that the program also includes ortho data, which is an aerial photo corrected for the curvature of the earth. There are photos of the entire county, including all of the farms, which will be useful for agricultural assessments.

A third feature of the new computer system is Epad, planning and development software. The software will let the county know if there is a gas well or landfill nearby, which must be considered when subdividing or planning development in a specific area.

Planning and development

The County created a new planning and development department and hired Krystle Fedoretz as the new planning and development officer.

"That brings all this process in house, which reduces costs for the developer and for the county," said Upham.

He said that county completed the Lac Sante area structure plan and passed the first reading of the amended intermunicipal development plan with the Town of St. Paul. Now the county is working on the Garner Lake area structure plan.

Road infrastructure

Rain was a feature of the year, affecting road construction, oiling and increasing the need for gravel. The county constructed 16 miles of road, according to Kitz, but had expected to complete 21 miles. Council had budgeted for 27 miles of county roads to be oiled but completed only 20 miles. Very few dust controls were done, with 21 completed out of an expected 90.

The paving of Krider Road, a resource road in the Elk Point area, was a major project completed in 2010. Because the road is heavily used by the oil industry, the province paid for 50 per cent of the costs, with industry paying for 25 per cent and the county contributing the final 25 per cent.

Water line

In 2010, the county continued to explore the potential of a water pipeline between Ashmont and Lottie Lake and between St. Paul and Elk Point. Upham said that a commission is being set up, and the County of St. Paul is debating if it wants to be involved in the commission to construct the water pipelines.

"As a long range plan … it is something that you believe that you have to be a part of without a doubt, but when you look at the numbers and crunch them, you sit back and pause," said Upham. He added that council doesn't want to commit to a project if the ratepayers can't afford it. "It will have budget implications for the county for the next 25 years."

He said that they will have to find a resolution to the question early in the new year, within the first six weeks.